Criteria to determine the extent of poverty in the country

7429. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) the criteria at present adopted by Government in determining the extent of povert in the country ;

(b) since when the present system is in vogue and details of people below poverty as a result thereof ; and

(c) what are the comparative merits and demerits of the criteria of hunger, foodsharing and calorie consumption in determining the poverty of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO) : (a) The extent of poverty in the country at present is determined on the basis of a poverty cut off point which is a poverty line expressed in terms of per capita monthly expenditure of Rs 49.09 in rural areas and Rs. 56.64 in urban areas at 1973-74 prices. This poverty line was anchored in a calorie norm of 2400 per capita daily in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas. The poverty line is updated for change in prices.

(b) The present method was adopted in the Sixth Five Year Plan. The percentage of population living below poverty line in 1987-88 as estimated by the Planning Commission are 33.4 per cent in rural areas, 20.1 per cent in urban areas and 29.9 per cent at all-India level. The Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor has estimated the percentage of people below the poverty line in 1987-88 at 39.06 per cent in rural areas. 40.12 per cent in urban areas and 39.34 per cent all-India level.

(c) Hunger criterion can be used to estimate the number of people who do not get adequate food according to their own perceptions. Thus, the criterion introduces a subjective element. Also "poverty" indicates a concept of deprivation which is wider then "hunger" alone. Food share criterion would measure poverty in terms of percentage of the family budget aspect on food. But in recent years changes in the pattern of family budget have been such that this criterion would not give a consistent picture of poverty. Calorie norm alone cannot be taken as a criterion for poverty for similar reasons of changes in consumption preferences. Therefore income or expenditure criterion is still considered to be the best.

Development of rural and trib l areas in Gujarat

7430. SHRI S. AUSTIN : Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have formulated any special scheme for the development of backward rural and tribal areas in Gujarat ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the amount allocated for the development of these areas during each of the last three years ; and

(d) the number of persons in Gujarat State benefited therefrom category-wise and year-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO) : (a) to (c) Information in regard to Plan Schemes which contribute to the development of backward, rural and tribal areas of Gujarat is given in statement I attached (*See* below).

(d) Estimates of beneficiaries under these schemes is available